

Madam Speaker, I appreciate my colleague from Georgia, the distinguished chairman of the Oversight Committee, for permitting me to speak on this bill, and I commend his hard work.

I find no small amount of irony hearing one of our friends from the other side of the aisle talk about how it might be time now for tax reform. The other side of the aisle was in charge for 12 years, and it is interesting that in the last 6 years, when they controlled the White House and Congress and had three major tax bills before us, the words in the Tax Code increased 1.5 million; 1.5 million extra words, special-interest provisions, while ignoring opportunities to simplify the code and to deal meaningfully with the tax tsunami that is coming at us, the alternative minimum tax.

I appreciate the hard work that the subcommittee has done, dealing with provisions like this that have no argument against them. These are things that are long overdue. I am glad we are moving forward. I commend the subcommittee Chair, and our Chair, Mr. Rangel, for looking at other provisions that would level the playing field, that would deal with simplification, deal with fairness, deal with some of the problems that lower-income citizens have in terms of trying to cope with the complexity, and being able to equip the Internal Revenue Service to make sure that we deal with hundreds of billions of dollars that is uncollected revenue that shifts the burden on the vast majority of Americans who are hard working, who report their income, who pay their taxes fairly and on time.

It isn't the fault of the worker who has got the W-2 that we have this vast amount of uncollected income. We have the complexity. I appreciate what this bill represents, a true effort at bipartisan cooperation to establish a foundation. We can move forward to have an Internal Revenue Code that is fair and effective for all.